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Historical Sketch
of New Orleans

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HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF

NEW ORLEANS.

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New Orleans is a city of the United States, situated on the left bank of the Mississippi River, one hundred and seven miles from its mouth, in longitude 90 and latitude 30, State of Louisiana.

At this point, the river bends abruptly southward, then east, then north and again east, thus portioning off the low concave land, which is always highest at the river's margin, a shallow basin not unlike the palm of ones hand. This deep, three sided bend, some nine miles in length, is the harbor of New Orleans, and on the low tract walled in by the levee that lines its bank and by a similar defence where Lake Ponchartrain, some four to six miles to the northward, shuts in the fourth side, lies New Orleans, the great seaport of the Mississippi Valley, and a city of 250,000 inhabitants.

The river at this point varies from two thousand to three thousand feet in width, and has a depth almost from bank to bank of sixty to four hundred feet. Around the margin of this fine harbor a line of steamers, and shipping extends for eight miles on either shore, moored in the busy season, sometimes two and five abreast, to the outer end of short, broad unsheltered wooden wharves that rest on piles driven firmly into the tenacious clay of the river bed. The speed of the current averages four to five miles an hour.

The poor little Franco-Spanish American port of the seventeenth century, being the key to that vast system of waterways of which the Mississippi is the main artery, was in 1803 purchased by the United States and with it the entire State of Louisiana.

As the dispenser of the products of this greatest agricultural valley of the world, New Orleans has grown from the wild, indolent town of 10,000 people, it then was, to the dimensions of a great metropolis. Along its winding harbor front one sees, in the season that follows the harvests of the South and West, the energies of an exporting movement not excelled in volume or value on the American continent, save by New York City. The levee, the wharves and contiguous streets teem with strenuous life, and are gorged with the raw staples of the countries far and near that lie about the Mississippi and its greater and lesser tributaries; sugar, molasses, rice, pine lumber, tobacco, corn, wheat, oats, hay, resin, turpentine, tropical fruits, in immense quantities, and above all, nearly one third of the whole world's entire supply of cotton; all other movement is insignificant. The import trade consists largely in the productions of

1389
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the tropics, and is rapidly increasing from year to year. Manufactures are not extensive; there are no fisheries of importance; no large transit of Emigrants; no notable government establishments, except a branch mint and a custom house.

No large city in America is so laid open to the sunshine and air. New Orleans covers an area of one hundred and fifty-six square miles, much more than that of any other city on the continent. On any hand it requires but a few steps aside from the current of commercial movement, to carry one into the bowery repose of a huge suburb, rather than of a city, or if of a city, a city of villas and cottages, of umbrageous gardens intersected by over five hundred miles of unpaved streets, shaded by forest trees; haunted by song birds; fragrant with a wealth of flowers that never fails a day in the year, and abundant in season with fruit—the fig, the plum, the pomegranate, the orange and the banana.

New Orleans is exceptionally interesting among cities of the United States, for the picturesqueness of its older sections, and the language, tastes and customs of a large portion of its people. It was founded in 1718, by Jean Baptiste Lemoyne de Bienville, a French Canadian, Governor of a French Colony which had been planted in 1699, by his brother, on the Gulf Coast near by at a point now called Biloxi. The history of the settlement from that date until 1803, is highly romantic, with frequent changes of fortune, varying sovereignty, dependence, independence, and wars, both defensive and aggressive, while the colony was slowly growing into importance under the rule of the sturdy Bourbon, the gay Spaiard, or easy going Creole. In 1803, within the lapse of thirty days it passed from Spanish to French and from French to American rule, then as now in its customs, its people and its architecture the least American of all the cities west of the Atlantic.

The Creoles of New Orleans and the surrounding delta, are a handsome, graceful and intelligent race of decidedly Gallic type, though softened in features, speech and carriage; they are brave, proud, courteous, slow to offend, quick to resent, fond of pomp, and display an ardent fondness for pageantries such as offer a strong hint of their Spanish American relationship.

The famous annual carnivals of New Orleans, which generally continue several days during the early part of February, have become world wide in historic interest on account of the grandeur, extravagance and immensity of the festivities, the processions, and the enthusiasm with which all the citizens seem to enter into the pleasures of the occasion. Many thousands of visitors from all parts of America, come yearly to see the glittering array of citizens attired as knights, dukes, lords and ladies, fairies, angels and mythological characters as they parade the streets in oriental pomp. The season usually closes with the grand Rex Ball to which are always invited many thousands of the most distinguished guests.

In addition to the Creole population there is a strong admixture of the German, Irish, French, Spanish and Italian. A visit to the old French Market will almost necessitate a knowledge of at least five languages, for unlike other American cities, in New Orleans many people transact business in their native tongue rather than adopt the universal English as used elsewhere.

The French Market is an unhealthy collection of huge sheds along the levee near Jackson Square, where venders offer for sale everything from a banana, a meals virtals, or a paper of pins, to a piano, silk dress, or set of furniture. On a Sunday morning the confusion of tongues, the bustle of the crowds, the smell of the offensive, the lack of religious regard for the day, and the general don't care jostling and pushing of one and all, form an experience that it is far more pleasant to read about than pass through. Of the 50,000 colored people in New Orleans a goodly portion converse only in French or Spanish. Burials in New Orleans cemeteries, owing to the undrained condition of the subsoil, are made almost exclusively above ground in tombs of peculiar build. Very costly and beautiful are some of these, while others consist of long alleys of four, six or eight shelf ovenlike walls, into which the bodies are placed and sealed with only a marble slab about two feet square in front, views of which are given in this work.

The climate is very similar to that of southern Italy. The thermometer rarely passes above 95° or below 27° F., but in the winter an occasional "Norther," assisted by the breezes from over the wide reaches of water and wet lands that lie about the city, gives the air a penetrating chill that feels much worse than the mercury indicates, while in summer the gulf breezes seem warmer than they really are.

Yellow fever makes its visits more rarely than in early history, during the long summer season, when the air is perceptibly though not excessively debilitating.

From November to June, when the commercial activity is at its height, the average temperature is 63° F., and with the exception of an occasional rain or Norther, affords the pleasures of a prolonged spring time, which adds much to the attractions for the tourist, the visitor and the invalid.

THE NORTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICAN EXPOSITION,

Will open in New Orleans, November 10, 1885, and close about April 1, 1886.

It will be held under the auspices and immediate management of a chartered company of citizens of New Orleans, with a capital of \$500,000, and assisted by commissioners from each of the United States, thus assuring a complete exhibition of the natural resources and various industries of this country.

The Exposition will be a fitting supplement to the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition just closed; and as it will inherit all the property

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of the late organization, including the grounds and commodious buildings erected in the City Park, with their entire complement of apparatus and necessary appliances for conducting an exposition on the grandest scale, exhibitors and visitors can rest assured of a thorough completion of all details and arrangements in advance of the date of opening.

The grounds upon which the Exposition is located comprise 274 acres contiguous to the city and known as the Upper City Park. They are beautifully shaded with massive live oaks, which have already become famous in connection with the late World's Exposition. In addition to this attraction, all that the art of the landscape gardener can effect has been accomplished by judicious expenditure of labor and money, until it is now conceded that they are the most beautiful in the United States, and certainly the best adapted for the purpose in every respect. Fronting on the Mississippi River, with ample wharf facilities for the largest steamer that floats, connected with the city by a new and thoroughly equipped steam railway, and by six lines of horse cars, and also by magnificent excursion steamers on the river, while all the trunk lines leading into New Orleans are connected with the grounds and buildings, it will be seen at a glance that the facility desired by exhibitors and visitors is fully provided. The main building is the largest on record. It is 1378 feet long and 905 feet wide with an iron extension 320 feet long and 125 feet wide. It is in perfect order, completely shafted for machinery, and possesses every convenience and improvement that the latest ingenuity could suggest for the purpose of an exposition.

The State Exhibits Building is next in importance, although it is of itself one of the largest buildings ever erected for the purpose, being 885 feet long and 565 feet wide, and it is also provided with every possible convenience, except steam power, as this building was not intended to accommodate any exhibits requiring power.

The Horticultural Hall is the largest conservatory in the world, and one of the handsomest structures of its kind ever built. It was erected by the management of the late World's Exposition, by special contract with the city, is 600x194 feet in dimensions, and is a permanent building, fitted with all the latest appliances for the purpose which it was intended.

The Art Gallery is an elegant and artistic structure, 250x100 feet, so arranged for mounting, accessibility and light as to present the best effects, and with ample accommodation for as large a collection as was ever exhibited on this hemisphere. It is erected wholly of iron, and is thoroughly fire-proof.

THE MEXICAN NATIONAL EXHIBIT.

(Octagonal 78x78.)

Though small in comparison with the various other exposition structures, yet this building, of most beautiful and exquisite design, of the costliest work-

manship, presents a strikingly attractive feature. It is built of iron and glass, of a design similar to a Moorish Kiosque. It is built by the Mexican Government, and will be taken down and removed to Mexico as soon as the exposition is over.

The Mexican National Headquarters is an attractively beautiful structure 300x192 feet, erected by the Mexican Government in the southeast portion of the Exposition Grounds. It furnishes offices for the various Mexican officials, and quarters for the famous Mexican Band, and different detachments of the Mexican Army on duty at the exposition. The building will be removed to the City of Mexico after the exposition is over.

The Upper City Park of the city of New Orleans presents unusually advantageous features for exposition purposes.

The Park is located about three and one-half miles from and west of the business center of the city. It lies between St. Charles avenue and the left bank of the Mississippi River. It is a beautiful tract of land, high and well drained, ornamented with numerous groves of the majestic live oak, orange, lemon, and magnolia shade trees, and tropical flowers; laid out into walks and roadways, and the whole landscape interspersed with lakes, islands, parterres of flowers, shrubbery, etc.

The Park is reached by one steam railway line, leading to the center of the city, and connecting with various trunk lines of railways coming to New Orleans, by five lines of horse cars, and by the river it is accessible to all classes of steam and sailing craft.

THE SEASON AT NEW ORLEANS,

During the period of the American Exposition, from November to April inclusive, is one of unusual attractiveness; with many fruits maturing, all classes of vegetables in their prime, balmy winds, blooming flowers and constant verdure; it affords a locality to which people of the world can eagerly resort; while the quaint city itself, with its cosmopolitan population and customs and generous hospitality, furnishes special, almost irresistible attractions to the stranger.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS.

The opportunities presented by New Orleans to the visitor for pleasant and profitable experience outside of the Exposition are innumerable. Theatrical and operatic attractions are always of the very highest order, and including the best talent extant. Opportunities for excursions by land and by water, inland and sea, are constantly available. Elegant steamboats ply from New Orleans, covering the Mississippi, to its famed delta and its numerous lower tributaries, penetrating the enchanting waters of interminable bayous, bordered with rich cane fields and shaded with the live oak. Steamers

sail regularly between the city shores of Lake Pontchartrain and its north shores and sound watering places, and down the Mississippi into the gulf to the shores and keys of Florida, to the coast places of Texas, Mexico, Central America, Caribbean Isles and West Indies. By rail, the "Land of Flowers" is reached in a few hours, and every prominent southern point—even the City of Mexico becomes conveniently accessible. Excursion rates will be so low that it will simply be a question of desire.

TRANSPORTATION.

Unprecedentedly low rates of transportation will prevail. The various railway trunk lines leading into New Orleans are the largest stockholders of the American Exposition. Their interested participation insures the exercise of their influence in securing from every point the lowest possible transportation rates. A cent a mile will probably be the maximum from any point.

HINTS TO VISITORS.

Arriving in New Orleans, remember that street cars run to almost every section of the city, starting from Canal street, and the uniform fare is five cents. Canal street is the business thoroughfare of the city, it runs from the Mississippi River west to the cemeteries, and is the dividing line between the French and the uptown portions, the latter being on the south side and extending to and beyond the Exposition Grounds. The river at the foot of Canal street runs directly north; water in the gutters invariably runs away from the river to the west and north to the lake.

Always make a bargain as to the prices to be paid before ordering carriages, meals, or services of any kind. The licensed transfer companies are safest for the handling of baggage. There are nearly ten thousand regular boarding and lodging houses in New Orleans, and many hundreds of restaurants where meals are served both on the American and European plans, at a cost to suit the desire of any and all. The principal hotels charge \$2.00 to \$4.00 per day. The prices for boarding and lodging elsewhere vary according as the establishment may be nearer or farther from Canal street; those on and nearest this street, naturally command higher prices. A good plan is to secure a room and then get meals at restaurants wherever one happens to be; parties wishing to economize by going up town for lodgings can find rooms among thousands of private houses.

The Bureau of Accommodation and Information has had the city thoroughly canvassed, divided into districts and sub-districts, each having connection with the central office by telephone, telegraph or messenger service. All the accommodation of the city has been listed and classified, its character and rate of

charges determined, so that no imposition or extortion can prevail, and the promptest information and assistance will be at all times available to the visitor. No charge for this service is made either against citizen or visitor.

Exposition season invariably brings to any city a greater or less number of the hoodlum class, street walking late at night is therefore not advisable.

The publishers of this work, after many years experience in New Orleans, have selected only such views as will be most interesting to the visitor. Many visitors spend one, two or three days in constant travel getting to New Orleans; they should therefore remain long enough to see all that is worth seeing, for such trips are in most cases one of the few opportunities of life.

Do not find fault with the peculiarities of the customs and the people, you come here to see and learn about Southern people and places; stay awhile and you will soon become accustomed to the ways of the city. Note the numerous porches and balconies extending around on two or three sides and in front of most of the better class of residences, indicative of the climate.

A good plan in visiting the Exposition is to go by one line of street cars and return by another. Be sure to go to the grounds at least once by one of the excursion boats which start every half hour from the foot of Canal street, this will afford eight miles of very interesting scenery along the levee, also take a boat ride down the river to the National Soldiers' Cemetery and Old Battle Ground, where Andrew Jackson won his famous victory in 1812.

Passing up Canal street from the river the first very large building on the right is the U. S. Custom House and Postoffice; it occupies a whole square, is built of New Hampshire granite, has been over forty years in the course of construction, and has cost the government several millions of dollars. The cashier's room in the center is called the marble room and is well worth a visit.

That large and beautiful red brick building at the left as you pass farther up Canal street, is the property of the Pickwick Club. The Illinois Central Railroad Co., have their ticket office on the first floor.

The new Cotton Exchange is a magnificent stone structure on Carondelet street one square from Canal, it is the pride of the Cotton Kings of the South.

The United States Mint at the foot of Esplanade street, is open to visitors six days in each week, do not fail to go there to see how Uncle Sam makes his money. Visit the Cemeteries, the West End, and the Old Spanish Fort on Lake Pontchartrain, the Old French Cathedral, and Jackson Square, take a walk along the levees and see the scores of steamers from all parts of the world loading with cotton, &c., go through the ice factory, watch the workings of the steam cotton presses, listen to the songs of the negroes at their work, buy one of Ward Brothers' Souvenir Albums and go home happy.

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